



UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #377
ATCHISON COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
"Where Success is Measured One Student at a Time"

February 23, 2015

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The Atchison County Community Elementary School has a confirmed case of scabies. The following letter is to educate you about scabies.

Scabies is an infestation of the skin by the human itch mite. The microscopic scabies mite burrows into the upper layer of the skin where it lives and lays its eggs. The most common symptoms of scabies are intense itching and a pimple-like skin rash. The scabies mite usually is spread by direct, prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with a person who has scabies.

Scabies is found worldwide and affects people of all races and social classes. Scabies can spread rapidly under crowded conditions where close body and skin contact is frequent. Institutions such as nursing homes, extended-care facilities, and prisons are often sites of scabies outbreaks. Child care facilities also are a common site of scabies infestations.

If a person has never had scabies before, symptoms may take as long as 4-6 weeks to begin. It is important to remember that an infested person can spread scabies during this time, even if he/she does not have symptoms yet.

The most common signs and symptoms of scabies are intense itching, especially at night, and a pimple-like itchy rash. The itching and rash each may affect much of the body or be limited to common sites such as the wrist, elbow, armpit, webbing between the fingers, nipple, penis, waist, belt-line, and buttocks. The rash also can include tiny blisters (vesicles) and scales. Scratching the rash can cause skin sores; sometimes these sores become infected by bacteria.

Tiny burrows sometimes are seen on the skin; these are caused by the female scabies mite tunneling just beneath the surface of the skin. These burrows appear as tiny raised and crooked grayish-white or skin-colored lines on the skin surface. Because mites are often few in number (only 10-15 mites per person), these burrows may be difficult to find. They are found most often in the webbing between the fingers, in the skin folds on the wrist, elbow, or knee, and on the penis, breast, or shoulder blades. The head, face, neck, palms, and soles often are involved in infants and very young children, but usually not adults and older children.

Scabies usually is spread by direct, prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with a person who has scabies. Contact generally must be prolonged; **a quick handshake or hug usually will not spread scabies.** Scabies is spread easily to household members. Scabies sometimes is spread indirectly by sharing articles such as clothing, towels, or bedding used by an infested person.



UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #377
ATCHISON COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
"Where Success is Measured One Student at a Time"

Diagnosis of a scabies infestation usually is made based on the customary appearance and distribution of the rash and the presence of burrows

On a person, scabies mites can live for as long as 1-2 months. **Off a person, scabies mites usually do not survive more than 48-72 hours.** Scabies mites will die if exposed to a temperature of 50°C (122°F) for 10 minutes.

Scabies can be treated. Products used to treat scabies are called *scabicides* because they kill scabies mites; some also kill eggs. Scabicides to treat human scabies are available only with a doctor's prescription. **An infected child may return to school the morning after their first treatment.**

In addition to the infested person, treatment also is recommended for household members, particularly those who have had prolonged skin-to-skin contact with the infested person. All persons should be treated at the same time in order to prevent re-infestation. Retreatment may be necessary if itching continues more than 2-4 weeks after treatment or if new burrows or rash continue to appear.

Scabies mites do not survive more than 2-3 days away from human skin. Items such as bedding, clothing, and towels used by a person with scabies can be decontaminated by machine-washing in hot water and drying using the hot cycle or by dry-cleaning. Items that cannot be washed or dry-cleaned can be decontaminated by removing from any body contact for at least 72 hours.

Fumigation of living areas is unnecessary.

Please be assured USD #377 is taking all precautions to prevent the spread of scabies.

If you have further questions, you may go to www.cdd.gov and search for scabies, or contact me at 913-833-4420.

Thank you,

Cheri D. Hawk, RN/BSN
USD 377 School Nurse